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THE EVOLUTION OF THE CONSTITUTION OF THE UNITED STATES. By Sydney George Fisher. Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott Co. 1897. pp. 393.

In this book Mr. Fisher undertakes to disprove the theory put into words by Mr. Gladstone when he said, "The American Constitution is the most wonderful work ever struck off at a given time by the brain and purpose of man." The author's main propositions are, that the national Constitution was the result of two hundred years of colonial experience; that, like the British Constitution, it was of slow and steady growth; and that its immediate sources were the colonial and revolutionary charters and constitutions, and not the governments of England or Holland. It must be admitted that Mr. Fisher has indubitably proved his case; but whether the task was as difficult or the result as novel as he seems to imagine may well be doubted. As a matter of fact, constitutional lawyers and scholars have for some time known that our Constitution, though the first working constitution to be reduced to the form of a written document, was yet the product of a selection of what had been found to be best and most practical in the colonial governments, and an avoidance of what had been shown to lead to bad results in the same, coupled with the necessity of compromise, which itself had no inconsiderable effect on the finally drafted instrument. Mr. Fisher, however, is entitled to the greatest credit for the admirable way in which he has handled the subject. His book is clear and readable, its arrangement is definite and systematic, and the manner in which every clause of the Constitution is traced and accounted for leaves nothing to be desired in point of convincing thoroughness. Especially good is the exposition of "Federalism." In the chapter on that subject the author satisfactorily shows the development of perhaps the fundamental idea of our Constitution; the action of the national government on the people directly, without working through the States, which are yet preserved as indestructible entities. Interesting, too, is the last chapter of the book, in which the author so effectually disposes of the theory that all that was good in our Constitution came from the Dutch, recently advanced by Mr. Campbell in his work "The Puritan in Holland, England, and America," as to make the latter gentleman appear almost ridiculous. Mr. Fisher's book will prove interesting to the general reader, and should be of use to the constitutional lawyer. It is of convenient size, neatly bound, well printed, and has an excellent index.

R. L. R.

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THE FEDERAL COURTS. Their Organization, Jurisdiction, and Procedure. By Charles H. Simonton, U. S. Circuit Judge. Richmond, Va.: B. F. Johnson & Co. 1896. pp. 120.

The contents of this little book are composed of lectures delivered by Judge Simonton before the Richmond Law School. The easy style of these lectures, and their freedom from unexplained technicalities, render them suitable for use by students who desire to prepare themselves for practice before the Federal courts, while by the aid of the index the book is made available for reference by the active lawyer. It appears by its form, which is practically continuous, with but few headings, to contain nothing but the lectures as originally delivered. The ground, however, seems to be thoroughly covered, and cases are quoted for the principal points.

R. G.